
Guidelines for 4-H Record Books

Record Keeping is part of the overall 4-H experience. A 4-H record book is an important part of completing each project. It is a written history of your project work and a narrative of your success and learning in 4-H. Record keeping helps you make a plan (goals), be organized, document your project work, evaluate your work, keep track of expenses, make positive decisions when solving problems, and just have fun by seeing what you have accomplished in 4-H.



Record Book Ages:

- Beginner Record Books: Ages 9-12
- Intermediate Record Books: Ages 13-15
- Senior Record Books: Ages 16-19. Must include a resume.

Page 1 – 4-H Report Form Cover:

This page includes information that is unique to you. Be sure to fill it out completely and collect the required signatures.

Page 2 – Project Work:

Page two has three parts: *A. Main project goals, B. Knowledge gained this year, and C. Main Project work overview.* Only three goals and three things learned in your main project should be listed.

A. Main Project Goals – List your three top S.M.A.R.T. goals (specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and timely). The goals should reflect the work completed in the project work overview section.

Specific: A specific goal has much greater chance of being accomplished than a general goal. To set a specific goal you must answer the “who, what, when, where, which, and why” questions.

Measurable: Establish a specific criteria for measuring progress toward the achievement of each goal you set. Can you tell when you meet your goals?

Attainable: When you identify goals that are most important to you, you begin to figure out ways you can make them come true. You develop the attitudes, abilities, skills, and financial capacity to reach them. You begin seeing previously overlooked opportunities to bring yourself closer to the achievement of your goals.

Relevant: To be relevant your goal must inspire you. If they do not, set new goals. Your goals must be realistic and you must have the resources to accomplish the goals.

Timely: A goal should be grounded within a time frame. With no time frame tied to a goal, there is no sense of urgency.

- B. Knowledge gained this year** – List the top things you learned from participating in the main project during this year. This should be a reflection upon the goals set in the previous section.
- C. Summary of main project work** – Judges will be looking for three basic things:
- a. *Amount of project work*
 - b. *Variety of project work*
 - c. *Quality of project work*

Report the past five years of project work (Exception – Beginners should only report one year of Clover Bud work). Describe in a chart form all the things you have done in your main 4-H project. Use numbers if you can (ex. number of animals, size of garden, etc.). The amount of project work shows that you are a hard worker. The number animals, dishes, meals, articles made, garments, repairs, quarts, activities, etc. are just some of the ways to show the amount of work you have done. The variety of work experiences indicates that you are trying new things and growing in your project work. For example, if your project is beef, you should not only report the number of animals you manage daily, but also related activities such as marketing, animal health, and breeding. The quality of work can be shown by indicating such things as money earned, savings realized by developing skills, and items made which are useful or enjoyed by others. In any case, you should report your project work in chronological order by year – start with the first year in the project.

Charts can be very effective in this section. They allow a great deal of information to be presented in a small amount of space. The first year should be listed first. Be sure that you identify for the reader what your numbers mean (hours, dollars, people, etc.).

Page Three – D. Educational experiences in you main 4-H project

This section is where you record activities you participated in and learned about in your main project. List tours taken, talks or demonstrations seen or heard, individual instruction, exhibits, workshops, camps, competitions, consumer experiences (shopping), interviews made, websites visited, books and pamphlets read. Numbers should reflect the number of activities participated in, NOT the number of contacts. Be sure to indicate level where educational experience took place (L= local; C=county; D=district; S=state, R=regional, N=national).

Page Four – E. Overview of other 4-H project and activity experiences.

This page is to be used to report experiences in those projects and activities that are not reported on page 2. Report no more than three projects. Be sure to list the name of each project and then tell your activities. Describe in a chart form all the things you have done in your other 4-H projects. Use numbers if you can (example: number of animals, size of garden, household safety checks completed, first aid kits built, etc.). Make active statements; for example: first aid kits assembled; household safety checks made, etc. Show financial information if you can. Do not give totals.

Page Five – F. Educational experiences in other 4-H projects and activities.

This section is where you record activities you participated in and learned about in your other projects. List tours taken, talks or demonstrations seen or heard, individual instruction, exhibits, workshops, camps, competitions, consumer experiences (shopping), interviews made, websites visited, books and pamphlets read. Numbers should reflect the number of activities participated in, NOT the number of contacts. Be sure to indicate level where educational experience took place (L= local; C=county; D=district; S=state, R=regional, N=national).

Page Six & Seven – A. 4-H Leadership Experiences

List your 4-H leadership experiences. Your leadership experiences are the most important things that tell others how you have been involved in leading and teaching. You have these pages to tell about leadership experiences. You should explain “How and what did I do to lead or teach others in 4-H?” Remember leadership is: planning, leading, teaching, conducting, organizing, coordination, directing, demonstrating, and talks etc. **Do not repeat any information listed on any other page.** Be sure to indicate level where educational experience took place (L= local; C=county; D=district; S=state, R=regional, N=national). Place an * beside leadership experiences that relate to your main project. Placing asterisks beside you’re your leadership in your main projects helps the judges to more easily see your main project leadership. Failure to use them may result in the loss of points.

B. Elected/Appointed Leadership

List 4-H officers you have held and committees served on. This includes everything from serving in an elected office such as president or reporter to serving on the refreshment committee. Give your specific responsibility. Indicate level (L= local; C=county; D=district; S=state, R=regional, N=national).

Page Eight & Nine – A. 4-H Community Service

Community service is the opportunity for 4-H members to go out into the community and help others to improve the quality of the town and the lives of those around them. How do you know if what you have been doing is community service? The definition is:

“What you as an individual or with others perform to help our community OR any planned activities (projects, programs) that benefit others outside your group. Activities can include single service events, a seasonal project or an ongoing project.”

This section is for community service activities only, and not for citizenship experiences (citizenship is a project). Please note that you should give the number of items contributed or the number of hours served. List by year those activities you have done which have helped someone else.

1 ½ pages are allowed to report this information. Be sure to include year, what did you do (kind of activity) and the number of hours or items contributed (members responsibility). List by year, starting with first year.

Section IV: A. 4-H Awards.

Awards and recognition is an important component of the 4-H experience. Please list by year the most important awards received in 4-H. This should include the most important awards received during the past five years. This should not take up more than half of page nine. Place an * beside awards and recognition that relate to your main project.

Page Ten – B. 4-H Promotion/Marketing

List by year the 4-H member's promotional/marketing activities. This includes speaking on the radio about 4-H, riding on a 4-H float during a parade, placing an article in the newspaper, displays promoting 4-H, etc. This does NOT include wearing t-shirts. Do not report activities listed on any other page. This should not take up more than half of page 10.

4-H Impact

In 100 words or less, detail what differences 4-H has made in your life. This should be a concise representation of what 4-H has done for you – the 4-H member. The reader of this should rapidly know how 4-H has changed your life.

4-H Story (5-pages max)

A story must have an introduction, a body and a closing. A suggested format for your story would include an introduction, information on your main project, other 4-H projects and activities, along with your leadership and community service activities. It is important that at the advanced level your story should reflect what you have learned over your 4-H career and how you have applied what was learned to your life experience. The closing paragraph could include, but is not limited to, your school and/or career goals. The story may be printed, typed or done on a computer. However, do NOT use a type size smaller than 12 characters per inch (preferred 12 pt. Times New Roman). All paper must be white and the standard 8 ½" x 11" size. Margins should be a minimum of 1" on all four sides, and the text should be double-spaced.

4-H Project Photos (four pages, one side only)

Photo pages should include new pictures each year and reflect the past five years of project work. 4-H members should use no more than 9 photos per page. Captions should contain the YEAR the photo was taken. You will have to make decisions about which photos to add and which ones to delete. Photo pages must reflect the following outline:

Page 1: Main Project Work

Page 2: Other Project Work

Page 3: Leadership

Page 4: Community Service

Photos should be action shots. Use high-quality photos. Computer-generated photos are okay. Each photo should have a caption (tells what is going on in the photo). Avoid excessive cropping. It is important to remember that the photo pages are a visual narrative and should not be a scrapbook format.

EXCEPTION – If photography is a main project, the 4-H member may have a total of 14 pages: Four (4) pages in front of the camera and 10 pages of photos that 4-H member has taken.
